

# MIDEWIN NATIONAL TALLGRASS PRAIRIE



## 2013 PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



### **NEW! Geology of Midewin**

10:00, April 13, October 5

1:00 May 11

A one-mile thick glacial ice sheet moved over northern Illinois 15,000 years ago leaving its mark on Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Prehistoric environments also existed long before the glacial period and included tropical swamplands and subtropical oceans. Join us for a guided trip to view the rocks, hills and plains in the Midewin area that bear evidence for these vastly different environments. This tour takes place on unimproved roads; gravel and potholes can be expected.

### **Ghosts of the Ammunition Plant**

10:00, April 20, June 29, August 3

12:00, October 12

In 1940, the U.S. Government acquired over 36,000 acres of land to build an ammunition plant. Why here? How was it built and how did it operate? Learn about the deadly explosion during World War II which shook Joliet and surrounding areas. Tour the inside of one of the few remaining warehouses and an ammunition storage bunker. This tour lasts approximately three hours with travel over unimproved roads, including gravel and potholes.

### **Cemetery Tour**

10:00, April 27

Join Midewin tour guides in an exploration of two historic cemeteries. Learn the history of Maple Hill and Klingler Cemeteries, while hearing about the lives of some of the farmers, merchants, soldiers, pioneers, their wives and children buried there.

### **Birds of Midewin**

8:00, May 18, June 1, June 8, June 15, June 22

From prairie, to wetland, to woodland, these habitats at Midewin offer opportunities to see varying species of birds. We will look for Grasshopper and Henslow's Sparrows, Dickcissels, Bobolinks, along with Red-tailed Hawks, Northern Harriers and numerous migrating birds. Learn about the Loggerhead Shrike and why it is also known as the "Butcher Bird."

### **Prairie Veterans**

10:00, May 25

The historic cemeteries of Midewin are the final resting places for several veterans of our country's armed services. This special Memorial Day Weekend tour will explore the lives of these people and the units they served with from the War Between the States to the Second World War.

## **German Immigrant Heritage**

11:00, June 1

The small rural cemeteries of Midewin attest to the many German speaking immigrants who came to this country in the 1800's to start a new life. Learn about the difficulties these early settlers overcame in their new land, and their patriotic zeal during the American Civil War.

## **Midewin by Horseback**

5:00, June 1, South Side

4:30, July 27, Iron Bridge Trailhead - Newest Multi-purpose Trail

8:30, August 3, South Side

10:30, October 12, South Side

Join equestrian volunteers for an interpretive ride through portions of Midewin not yet open to the public. Learn about the history and how the land is being managed today. PLEASE NOTE: horse and rider will have to cross bridges, and share the trail system with cattle. Participants must bring their own horses. South Side rides meet at South Arsenal and Chicago Roads.

## **Midewin on Foot**

10:00, June 8

Learn about Midewin's past, present and future. Visit restored prairie and wetlands, observe Grassland birds, hike Prairie Creek Woods Trail and enter an abandoned arsenal bunker on this 2- 2-1/2 hour guided tour. Come prepared to hike 3 to 4 miles at a slow to average pace - with several interpretive stopping points along the way.

## **Twilight Bike Tour**

6:00, June 8, July 13, August 10

Tour open and closed areas of Midewin. Expect to see an abundance of wildlife which may include deer, turkey, grassland birds and maybe a coyote or two. Since at least part of the route will be on gravel surfaces, "fat" tires are recommended.

## **Midewin—Behind the Scenes: Two Part Exploration**

10:00, June 15, July 20, August 17, September 21

### **Part 1 10:00**

Join us for a short half-hour walk around the Welcome Center at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. Be introduced to the plants of Midewin; learn how we produce seed to restore the prairie and discover the different habitats for wildlife that Midewin offers. Find out about the recreational opportunities available.

### **Part 2 11:00**

"Take a one hour exploration, on foot and by car caravan, to learn why we do what we do while seeing Midewin landscapes currently under restoration. Learn why what we do is important, how Midewin will change and what that will mean for wildlife and recreation.

## **Buzzing About the Prairie**

9:30, June 19—**Wednesday**

It's National Pollinator Week! Join us to discover why bees, butterflies, other insects and birds are so important to all gardens, including the prairie. Capture some pollinators as we use sweep nets, get a close look at them through magnified insect containers and help plant a pollinator garden. Transfer your new-found knowledge and skills to your own garden!

## **Family Rise and Bike: Midewin for Kids**

10:00, June 22

Kids, bring your bike (and your parents!) to explore Midewin. An interpreter will lead the group on a time warp through Midewin's past, present and future from the back of your bicycle. During your travels you'll be transported to different points in time of Midewin's land history, from the time of the glaciers to Native American habitation to World War II to present day. You'll then get a glimpse of the future of Midewin.....where the bison once roamed, will they roam again?

## **Prairie Imagination Stations: Midewin for Kids**

10:00, July 6

Take a hike led by a Naturalist where you will visit stations that get your creative juices flowing! You will make your own photo using the water and sun of the prairie, build (and keep) a "camera" to snap mental images of flowers, wildlife and people of the prairie, and meet a surprise visitor!

## **Midewin by Auto**

1:00, July 13

10:00, August 10, September 21

Learn about Midewin's past, present, and future from the comfort of your vehicle. Visit restored wetlands and prairie, observe grassland birds which have returned to these areas, while learning about our restoration efforts. Enter one of the remaining bunkers for a glimpse into the past. This tour takes place on unimproved roads, expect potholes and gravel.

## **Critter Hike: Midewin for Kids**

10:00, July 27

Join interpreters on a hike and learn about some of the most beautiful and misunderstood creatures in the natural world. With net in hand, you'll gently capture, explore, investigate (and release!) butterflies, spiders, beetles and more!

## **Hawk Talk: Midewin for Kids**

10:00, August 10

Join Raptor Handler Tanja of Prairie State Nature Programs for a very exciting interactive program where you will meet one of Illinois' native birds-of prey: a red-tailed hawk. Learn about their diet, habitat and why hawks are such an important part of the prairie ecosystem. There will be a "Touch Table" for everyone to explore feathers, eggs, talons and skulls, as well as the opportunity to ask plenty of questions!

## **150th Anniversary: BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA & THE 100TH ILLINOIS REGIMENT**

1:00, September 21

The 100th Illinois Regiment was made up almost entirely of men from Will County, including a number from the farms that today are part of Midewin. Learn what part they played in the September 19 and 20, 1863 Battle of Chickamauga, Georgia. This battle was the costliest in the Western Theater of the American Civil War, with more casualties than Antietam, almost one year to the day earlier.

## **“TRICK-OR-TREAT!” - BUNKER STYLE**

5:00, October 19

Join us for our 4th Annual Halloween event. Discover Midewin’s past, present and future as we meet and greet old and new friends while being guided by lanterns along trails and in bunkers. Drinks and treats will be provided around a campfire. Whether you are in costume or not, you won’t want to miss one of our most popular events, so please register early. Meet at the Iron Bridge Trailhead. Guided tours depart the campfire ring every 15 minutes and last over an hour.

## **Cemetery at Twilight**

5:00, October 26

Our annual cemetery tour at twilight is also very popular. Watch the shadows play across the headstones while we learn about the occupants of various graves—how did they live, did they die a tragic death? Maybe we’ll hear the coyotes howling as the sun begins to set..... Perfect as our last tour of the year and for the Halloween Season!

## **Welcome to Midewin!**

Today, about 9,100 acres of Midewin are open to the public, including over 34 miles of trails. About 22 miles of trails are for shared use by hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians. Over 12 miles are for hiking only. Bicycles, horses and leashed dogs are restricted to designated trails at all times.

**The Midewin Welcome Center** is a great place to start your Midewin experience. Here you will see exhibits designed to lay the groundwork for your exploration of Midewin, whether on your own or participating in one of our escorted programs. Staff at the Welcome Center will be glad to answer questions and assist you with planning your visit. Be sure to check out a variety of gifts and outstanding literature in our bookstore, which is operated by the Midewin Interpretive Association, a private not-for-profit partner of the Forest Service.

**Program Duration:** Unless otherwise noted, each program will last approximately 2 hours.

**Reservations:** Advanced registration is required. To register, please call 815/423-6370 or e-mail us at [Midewin\\_RSVP@fs.fed.us](mailto:Midewin_RSVP@fs.fed.us). You must use the underscore and an e-mail confirming your registration will be sent. Please include contact information in the event we need to notify you of any cancellations or changes to the program.

**Cancellations:** We will make every effort to offer all activities as scheduled. All tours, but primarily bike and horse tours may be cancelled or rescheduled due to inclement weather or poor site condition. We will contact you as soon as possible in the event of a cancellation. You may also call 815/423-6370 to leave a message after normal business hours, which are 8:00—4:30, Monday through Saturday.

**Where to Meet:** Unless other noted, all programs begin and end at the Midewin Welcome Center located at 30239 S. State Route 53, Wilmington, Illinois—the building with the 3 flagpoles in front.

**When to Arrive:** All programs begin promptly at the published time. Please plan to arrive 15 minutes early to allow time for registration.

**Auto Caravan Tours:** These tours take place on unimproved roads. Please be prepared for potholes and gravel as you drive your personal vehicle along these routes.

**Bike and Horse Tours:** Participants in these activities must provide their own bicycle or horse.

**Safety:** Public safety concerns prevent access to the interior or remaining arsenal buildings on tours.

**\*\*These tours are escorted tours in areas that are normally CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC. Unescorted entrance into these areas is strictly prohibited.**